DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 396 614 HE 029 243

TITLE	SREB Teacher Salaries: Update for 1995-96 and Estimated Increases for 1997.
INSTITUTION	Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Ga.
PUB DATE	Jun 96
NOTE	6p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Southern Regional Education Board, 592 Tenth Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia, 30318-5790.
PUB TYPE	Statistical Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Cost Indexes; Demography; *Educational Finance; Elementary School Teachers; Elementary Secondary Education; Secondary School Teachers; State Standards; *Teacher Salaries; *Trend Analysis
IDENTIFIERS	Alabama; Arkansas; Florida; Georgia; Kentucky; Louisiana; Maryland; Mississippi; North Carolina; Oklahoma; South Carolina; Southern Regional Education Board; Tennessee; Texas; Virginia; West Virginia

ABSTRACT

Updated information is provided on teacher salaries for 1995-96 and estimated increases for the 1996-97 school year in the 15 states belonging to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Pay raises for 1996-97 are estimated as ranging from 1.75 percent in Virginia to 6 percent in Georgia. Especially noted are South Carolina's continuing success in increasing teacher salaries and the financial encouragement offered by some states to teachers seeking national certification. Establishment of salary goals by Georgia, North Carolina, and Louisiana are also reported with potential cost figures. The positive effects of salary goals set earlier by Kentucky, West Virginia, Oklahoma, and Arkansas are reported. The paper also notes that salary averages can mask wide variations and often reflect demographic trends as well as general pay increases. The relationship of cost-of-living to the value of teacher salaries is briefly discussed. Tables present data for each state giving estimated 1995-96 and 1996-97 average salaries and the national rankings of the SREB states adjusted and un-adjusted for cost-of-living. (DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 396 614

Southern Regional Education Board
592 Tenth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30318-5790
(404) 875-9211

SREB Teacher Salaries: Update for 1995–96 and Estimated Increases for 1997

June 1996

HE 029 243

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

SREB

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

Southern Regional Education Board
592 Tenth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30318-5790
(404) 875-9211

SREB Teacher Salaries: Update for 1995–96 and Estimated Increases for 1997

June 1996

As the beginning of a new fiscal year approaches, most legislatures in the SREB states have concluded their budget deliberations for 1996, and districts across the region are preparing operating budgets for 1996-97. The good news is that as states continue to recover from the recession, some have set their sights on goals such as raising their teacher salaries to the national average or to other important benchmarks. The hard part will be continuing the momentum and commitment it will take to reach and maintain these lofty goals.

Often states have found it difficult to sustain the efforts to raise salaries in the face of other budget demands. States reach a goal and then relax their efforts only to find that they lose ground to other states continuing to push salaries upward. South Carolina is an example of one state, however, that has maintained long-term support for a salary goal. The Education Improvement Act of 1984 set the goal that the average teacher salary in South Carolina would equal the Southeastern average. The 3.5 percent pay raise funded for 1996-97 is estimated to keep the state's teacher salaries in line with that goal.

Where information is available for 1996-97, estimated pay raises for teachers range from 1.75 percent in Virginia to 6 percent in Georgia. Georgia's increase is the second step of a four-year plan to reach the national average. No funds were earmarked for raises in Mississippi, and the governor of North Carolina has proposed that teachers receive raises of 7 percent to support the goal of reaching the national average salary by 2001. The Oklahoma legislature expanded the minimum salary schedule from 15 steps to 25 steps to recognize the longevity of veteran teachers, an issue not addressed in 1990 reform legislation, but an estimate of salary increases statewide is not currently available.

Several states have allocated funds to provide teachers seeking national certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards with a bonus or the fees to cover the process, or both. These states include Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and Oklahoma. While the numbers of teachers involved are small and bonuses given will have little impact on state salary averages, this is a way to recognize teachers who meet high standards.

New Goals for Raising Teacher Salaries

In Georgia, the governor and legislature are working to raise the state's average salary to the national average by 1998-99. Substantial pay raises given in 1995 and 1996 (5 percent and 6 percent, respectively) have been the primary reason the state has moved from 86 percent of the national average in 1994 to what is currently estimated to be nearly 91 percent of the national figure. In addition, the legislature has approved another 6 percent pay increase for the 1996-97 fiscal year, which will most likely close the gap even further. Georgia's increase in the average teacher salary of 5.1 percent between 1995 and 1996 is the greatest in the region and is estimated to be the fourth highest in the nation behind Missouri (6.9 percent), Pennsylvania (5.4 percent) and Washington (5.2 percent). Georgia now ranks third in the region behind Maryland and Virginia, up from fifth in 1994.

North Carolina's governor has also set the national average salary as a goal for teachers in that state and has recommended pay increases averaging 7 percent for 1996-97. The governor's plan is to meet the

national figure in the year 2001. The estimated cost of the plan is in excess of $1 billion and would require average annual pay increases between 7.5 and 8 percent. North Carolina's average teacher salary is currently estimated to be nearly 81 percent of the national average.

In Louisiana, the governor has set a goal to have teacher salaries meet the Southeastern average by 1998-99 at an estimated cost of $270 million. Louisiana's average teacher salary currently ranks 15th among the SREB states and is about 83 percent of the regional average. Pay raises approved for 1996-97 will provide teachers with 3.6 percent increases on average. The actual raises will vary based on increased funds provided through the finance formula. All teachers will receive raises of at least $750; those in less wealthy districts will receive increases of up to $1,200.

Early Goals Have Influenced Salaries

A number of SREB states have set salary goals either independent of or tied to major educational reforms. Whether these goals focused on raising average salaries by a certain dollar amount, by a certain percentage, or toward a specific goal like the Southeastern average, they significantly improved teacher salaries in those states.

Kentucky, West Virginia and Oklahoma included salary issues as part of reforms passed in 1990. Kentucky promised teachers a 15 percent pay raise over two years and actually provided about 17 percent. According to the plan in West Virginia, teachers received pay raises averaging $5,000 over three years, which raised the average salary by nearly 34 percent between 1990 and 1994. Oklahoma targeted beginning teacher salaries and vowed to raise minimum pay from $15,060 to $24,060 in five years. Legislation passed in 1996 expands the salary schedule to provide salary increases for veteran teachers who did not benefit from the 1990 actions.

Like Oklahoma, the aim of Tennessee's 1988 goal was to raise beginning teacher salaries. Tennessee planned to increase the minimum from $16,900 to $18,500 in two years. Because of budget problems, the effort was extended to a third year when beginning teacher pay reached $18,585.

In Arkansas, a 1991 plan to reach national educational goals also created a special fund, supported by an increase in sales tax, to help improve teacher salaries. While a specific goal was not set, the average salary of teachers in Arkansas has increased 24 percent in the last five years, the highest percentage increase in the region.

Increases in Salary Averages Reflect More Than General Pay Increases

When looking at salary averages, it is important to remember that changes in those figures reflect not only general pay raises, but also changes in the teaching force. The retirement of more experienced higher-paid teachers, the employment of new inexperienced teachers at the lower ranges of the salary schedule, and annual "step increases" for returning teachers all affect the statewide averages.

In addition, salary averages can mask wide variations in actual salaries from state to state and from district to district. In an example published by SREB a year ago, one SREB state with an average salary of $27,800 had district averages ranging from $18,700 to $32,700, a variation of 74 percent. What makes up the current estimated national salary average of $37,794 are state averages ranging from about $49,600 in Alaska to $26,350 in South Dakota.

SREB states have significantly increased spending on teacher salaries; a good part of that spending, however, is not reflected in pay raises. State and local efforts to keep up with growing enrollments and to improve quality by reducing class sizes, particularly in the lower grades, have increased the teaching force in nearly all of the SREB states. In the last five years, SREB states have added nearly 97,700 new

teaching positions, more than all other states in the nation combined. In the last year alone, SREB states created about 14,400 new teaching positions. At an average salary of $32,366, states are spending $466 million (plus the cost of benefits) for these new positions.

Estimated Average Teacher Salaries in the SREB States, 1995-96 and Estimated Increases for 1996-97

	Estimated Average Teacher Salary 1995-96	Estimated Percent Change 1995 to 1996	Estimated Percent Change 1991 to 1996	Estimated Percent Increase 1996 to 1997
United States	$ 37,794	2.7 %	14.6 %	NA
SREB States	32,366	2.3	12.7	NA
SREB States as a percent of U.S.	85.6 %			
Alabama	$ 31,307	0.5 %	16.5 %	4 %
Arkansas	29,322	1.3	24.2	NA
Florida	33,320	2.2	9.0	NA
Georgia	34,307	5.1	17.6	6
Kentucky	33,108 *	2.6	13.7	NA **
Louisiana	26,800	1.3	2.1	3.6 #
Maryland	41,215	1.4	7.4	NA
Mississippi	27,689	3.2	13.6	0
North Carolina	30,564	-0.7	4.4	7 +
Oklahoma	28,909 *	2.6	18.2	NA
South Carolina	31,568	4.3	11.5	3.5
Tennessee	33,451	3.0	18.4	3
Texas	32,000	2.5	15.7	NA
Virginia	34,687	2.0	7.6	1.75
West Virginia	32,155	0.7	23.8	++

NA = Not Available

* Estimated by NEA

** In Kentucky, no funds were earmarked for salary increases, but language in the appropriation bill urges districts to give raises averaging about $900.

\# In Louisiana, wealthy districts will give raises of at least $750; raises in less wealthy districts will reach up to $1,200.

\+ Governor's proposal in North Carolina.

++ In West Virginia, teachers will receive $500 plus $25 for each year of experience.

SOURCES: National Education Association, *Rankings of the States, 1992*; Georgia Department of Education; unpublished data.

Does Cost-of-Living Make a Difference?

Cost-of-living does affect the value of teacher salaries in the SREB states but not as dramatically as one might expect. The averages and rankings of nearly all SREB states improve when cost-of-living is considered. Maryland is the only SREB state in which the value of salaries declines when living expenses are factored in, but it still remains above the national average. Among SREB states, only Kentucky moves above the national average when the cost-of-living is considered. It is encouraging, however, that when

rankings are adjusted for cost-of-living, nearly half of the SREB states fall within the top half of states nationally. Without the adjustment, Maryland and Virginia are the only states in the top half.

States where the cost-of-living affects the value of salaries the most include West Virginia, Kentucky, Alabama and Texas. When living expenses are factored in, rankings in these states improve by at least 10 positions. Less change is evident in Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

National Rankings of SREB States Adjusted for Cost-of-Living, 1994-95

Unadjusted National Rank		National Rank Adjusted for Cost-of-Living	
11	Maryland	12	Maryland
		15	Kentucky
	— National Average Salary —		
25	Virginia	17	West Virginia
26	Florida	18	Virginia
27	Kentucky	22	Georgia
29	Georgia		
32	West Virginia	23	Florida
35	Tennessee	24	Tennessee
36	Texas	26	Texas
39	North Carolina	29	Alabama
40	Alabama	31	North Carolina
41	South Carolina	32	South Carolina
43	Arkansas	36	Arkansas
47	Oklahoma	38	Oklahoma
48	Mississippi	43	Mississippi
49	Louisiana	45	Louisiana

SOURCES: American Federation of Teachers, *Survey and Analysis of Salary Trends 1995.*

For further information, contact Gale F. Gaines, *SREB Associate Director for State Services* (404) 875-9211.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD
592 Tenth Street, N.W.
Atlanta, GA 30318-5790

U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
ATLANTA, GEORGIA
PERMIT No. 404
NON-PROFIT ORG.